

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2004

The Honorable Gary Locke
Governor
State of Washington
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary
United States Dept. of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Governor Locke and Secretary Abraham:

We have become increasingly concerned about the lack of an agreement between the State of Washington and the Department of Energy to resolve the ongoing dispute pertaining to the classification of High Level Waste.

Our primary and overriding concern is the safe and timely cleanup of the Hanford site. We know that we share this goal with both the State of Washington and the United States Department of Energy.


We are calling on you to take the initiative to establish immediate high level discussions between the State of Washington and the Department of Energy to resolve this issue. We would like to see a commitment to continue the dialogue until such time as a mutually acceptable agreement can be reached.

We know the parties have legitimate disagreements. We would ask that such conversations take place without preconditions being set, which could serve to hinder successful negotiations.

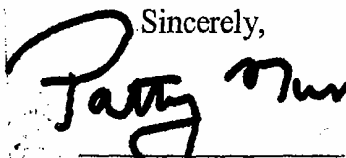
The stakes are incredibly high and the price of failure is the continued exposure of the people and the environment to unnecessary risks, by potentially slowing the pace of cleanup activities.

We know you share our commitment to making our communities safe. We ask for your leadership to create momentum for a successful resolution of this issue.

In the past when seemingly intractable problems have faced cleanup obstacles, they have been solved by your common commitment to rise above the obstacles to reach shared objectives. We are confident that working together this outcome can be reached.


Congressman Doc Hastings

Sincerely,


Senator Patty Murray


Senator Maria Cantwell